

89-1243

Supreme Court, U.S.

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No. _____

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER TERM, 1989

JOSEPH M. GALLOWAY,
JOSEPH M. GALLOWAY, P.C.,
CLAIR J. GALLOWAY,

Petitioners,

vs.

ALAN ZUCKERT,
JANICE H. ZUCKERT,

Respondents.

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI
TO THE IOWA COURT OF APPEALS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. May a State, through its Appellate Courts, do what its Legislature cannot do -- namely, establish standards for libel which violate the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution?

2. To sustain a libel claim, is there a rational basis for requiring a plaintiff in a non-public figure, non-public concern case, to show only negligence on the part of a media defendant, whereas a similarly-situated plaintiff must show actual malice to sustain a libel claim against a non-media defendant?

3. May "actual malice" be shown, not only by an intent to injure through falsehood, but by recklessness in determining the facts?



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AND RULE 28.1 STATEMENT**

The caption lists the names of all
parties to this proceeding.

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PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI
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COME NOW Plaintiffs and respectfully
petition for a writ of certiorari to
review the judgment and opinion of the
Iowa Court of Appeals in this case.

OPINIONS BELOW

The opinion of the Iowa Court of
Appeals is unreported and appended as

Appendix A. Said Court's denial of rehearing is unreported and appended as Appendix B. The Iowa Supreme Court's denial of discretionary review is unreported and appended as Appendix C.

STATEMENT OF JURISDICTION

The judgment of the Iowa Court of Appeals was entered on August 23, 1989, and a petition for rehearing was denied on September 6, 1989. The order of the Iowa Supreme Court denying discretionary review was entered on November 3, 1989. This Court's jurisdiction is invoked under 28 U.S.C. Section 1257(3).

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS INVOLVED

The Fourteenth Amendment provides in pertinent part that:

[N]or shall any State . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On May 21, 1986, Defendant Alan Zuckert wrote a letter addressed to Plaintiff Joseph M. Galloway, P.C. which had the effect of accusing it and Joseph M. Galloway of breaking their word in a business transaction. Said Defendant sent copies of the letter to the Chairman of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, of which Plaintiffs were members, and to a person Plaintiffs did business with.

In pertinent part, the letter stated that:

May I remind you that you and I had a verbal agreement wherein you and your father would continue to lease space at 1535 Linden. We reached that agreement during a telephone discussion around noon on January 29, 1985. Then on February 18, 1985, you did an about-face and advised me you were moving. This took place after verbally agreeing to lease part of the 2nd floor at 1535 Linden. As a result of your abrupt change, I decided I could no longer do business with you on a handshake . . . [emphasis in original]

A libel suit (plus landlord-tenant causes of action not relevant here) was filed by Plaintiffs on June 27, 1986. Defendants answered and filed counter-claims (which are not at issue here). Defendant claimed no qualified privilege for his statements (nor would he have been entitled to any even if claimed).

Ample evidence was introduced at trial to show that Defendant, not Plaintiffs, had gone back on his word with respect to the lease.

The trial court instructed the jury, over objections, that Plaintiffs must show actual malice. The trial court also, over objections, defined actual malice as requiring an intent to injure. The jury verdict and judgment against Plaintiffs were entered on January 19 and 20, 1988, respectively. Plaintiffs made a timely appeal to the Iowa Supreme Court. The Iowa Court of Appeals, as a

subordinate arm of the Iowa Supreme Court, affirmed the trial court. Re-hearing was denied and the Iowa Supreme Court denied discretionary review.

RAISING OF CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES IN COURTS BELOW

There are two Constitutional issues involved here: equal protection, and the definition of actual malice.

The equal protection argument was not raised at the trial court level or in the initial appeal. However, because of a change in court-made "law" since that time (but prior to the ruling on appeal in our case) it was not possible to do so.

What happened is that this case and another case, Jones v. Palmer Communications, Inc., 440 N.W.2d 884, 898 (Iowa 1989) were under appeal to the Iowa Supreme Court at the same time. After

the briefs and arguments in our appeal were made and the case was submitted, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled in the Jones case that when a plaintiff sues the media for libel, in a non-privileged, non-public figure situation, the plaintiff need show only negligence, not actual malice.

Then the subordinate arm of the Iowa Supreme Court -- the Iowa Court of Appeals -- ruled in our case that we must show actual malice in a libel suit against a non-media private party, even though our situation was also non-privileged and did not involve a public figure. No mention of the Jones case was made in the opinion and there was no attempt to show a rational basis for this distinction.

Since Plaintiffs could not have known of the later Jones decision at

trial or when the appeal was submitted, this qualifies as an "extraordinary circumstance" in which the U. S. Supreme Court may consider an issue even though not raised at trial or in the initial appeal. Sure-Tan, Inc. v. NLRB, 467 U.S. 883, 896 n. 7 (1984).

With respect to the definition of actual malice, our objections were timely raised in the trial court (Trial Transcript p. 776) and before the Iowa appellate courts (Plaintiffs' Brief, p. 21).

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

1. ARE COURTS, AS WELL AS THE LEGISLATURE, SUBJECT TO THE EQUAL PROTECTION GUARANTEE?

It is undisputed that the Legislature of a State may not violate the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

Likewise, the Courts of a State are similarly subject to the 14th Amendment -- and for purposes of this case, specifically, the Equal Protection clause. Blake v. McClung, 172 U.S. 239, 260 (1898); Ex parte Virginia, 100 U.S. 339, 347 (1879).

This is not some obsolete concept. As Justice Black stated in his dissent in Beck v. Washington, 369 U.S. 541, 568 (1962):

It is a denial of equal protection of the law and a State should no more be allowed to deny a defendant protection of its laws through its judicial branch than through its legislative or executive branch.

Therefore, state courts, as an arm of the state, cannot violate the Equal Protection clause any more than could any other branch of state government. Ex parte Virginia, supra, p. 347.

We submit that this is even more compelling when the courts are acting in

the "quasi-legislative" capacity of promulgating legal standards as opposed to merely applying existing law to a set of facts.

2. WITH RESPECT TO A LIBEL CLAIM,
IS THERE ANY RATIONAL BASIS FOR
TREATING PRIVATE DEFENDANTS BETTER
THAN MEDIA DEFENDANTS?

Under the Equal Protection clause, "The State must proceed upon a rational basis and may not resort to a classification that is palpably arbitrary". Allied Stores of Ohio v. Bowers, 358 U.S. 522, 527 (1959).

That is to say, mere difference is not enough: the attempted classification 'must always rest upon some difference which bears a reasonable and just relation to the act in respect to which the classification is proposed . . .'

It is idle to elaborate the differences between mutual and stock companies. These are manifest and admitted. But the statutory discrimination has no reasonable relation to these differences . . . The prevailing opinion in that court fails to disclose any good reason for the discrimination.

Hartford Co. v. Harrison, 301 U.S. 459,
462-463 (1937).

There is no rational basis or good reason for treating media defendants worse than private defendants, all other things being equal. On the contrary, because of the First Amendment, media defendants are usually treated better (never worse) than private party defendants in an equivalent situation.

Here, through court-made "law" in the Jones case, the State of Iowa through its Supreme Court has decided that when a plaintiff sues the media (in a non-privileged, non-public figure situation), only negligence need be shown.

But the State of Iowa at the same time has said (through its appellate courts) that a similarly-situated plaintiff must show actual malice if a private party has been sued rather than the media.

We submit that there is no rational basis for this distinction and therefore it violates the Equal Protection clause.

Why are we concerned how defendants are treated by these standards? Because the reverse side of the coin is a direct impact on our libel claim as plaintiffs.

This case is distinguishable from earlier decisions of the U. S. Supreme Court which held that the Equal Protection clause does not guarantee that state courts will not "change their mind" at a later time. Here, both cases were appealed to the same court (Iowa Supreme Court), and were under final submission at the same time (one to the primary court and one delegated to its subordinate arm). The subordinate arm, the Iowa Court of Appeals, has no authority to overrule the higher Iowa Supreme Court. An unconstitutional

discrimination occurred, which by law cannot be considered to be merely a state supreme court's "changing its mind" since the Iowa Court of Appeals cannot overrule the Iowa Supreme Court. It should be noted that there is no automatic appeal of right from the Iowa Court of Appeals to its Supreme Court. Such review is purely discretionary and usually denied.

Never before has this situation occurred -- two cases appealed to the same court and under submission at the same time (although one was transferred to a subordinate arm).

Granting the writ will clarify the extent to which the judicial branch is subject to the equal protection clause -- an issue which has been seldom addressed, especially in recent years. It will not lead to a "parade of horribles", however, because of the unique situation in this case.

3. ACTUAL MALICE MAY BE BASED ON
RECKLESSNESS WITHOUT AN INTENT TO INJURE

The Iowa Court of Appeals held in this case that actual malice required an intent to injure. This assertion comes from Iowa First Amendment cases repeating what the U. S. Supreme Court has said on this subject.

It is certainly true that the U. S. Supreme Court has stated that a mere intent to injure another is not sufficient -- there must be an intent to injure through falsehood. In other words, the focus is not on the defendant's like or dislike of plaintiff, but on the defendant's state of mind with respect to the truth of the statement (Did he think it was true? Did he think it was false? Was he reckless in not verifying the facts?)

This standard does not require that there always be an intent to injure --

rather it means that an intent to injure by itself is irrelevant. Recklessness in checking the accuracy of the statement, even without an intent to injure, can be sufficient. This is confirmed by Curtis Publishing Co. v. Butts, 388 U.S. 130, 156-57 (1967), especially n. 20. In that case a libel award was affirmed even though there was no serious contention that defendant had any animosity toward plaintiff.

The Iowa appellate courts have therefore misinterpreted the U. S. Supreme Court definition of actual malice.

The writ should be granted because (1) The U. S. Supreme Court's statements on this issue, with all due respect, have resulted in confusion. A comprehensive definition of actual malice, incorporating both the oft-quoted "intent to injure through falsehood" aspect, together with the recklessness without

intent to injure aspect of the Curtis case, has never been set forth. (2) This principle has nationwide impact and is not just restricted to Iowa.

CONCLUSION

The petition for a writ of certiorari should be granted, the holding of the Iowa Court of Appeals should be reversed, and this case should be remanded for proceedings consistent with this Court's opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Joseph M. Galloway, a member of the Bar of this Court, hereby certify that I served three copies of the attached Petition for Writ of Certiorari by first class mail on Jonathan C. Wilson and Diane M. Stahle, attorneys for Defendants, 2300 Financial Center, Des Moines, Iowa, 50309, on this 30~~st~~ day of JAN., 1990.

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APPENDIX A

- 1a -

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

JOSEPH M. GALLOWAY, et. al.,)
Plaintiffs-Appellants,)
vs.)
ALAN ZUCKERT, et. al.,)
Defendants-Appellees.)

9-59
88-267

[Filed August
23, 1989]

Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Polk County (66-39057), Glenn E. Pille, Judge.

Tenants appeal and owners cross-appeal a jury verdict in this landlord-tenant dispute. AFFIRMED.

Joseph M. Galloway and Clair J. Galloway, Des Moines, pro se.

Jonathan C. Wilson and Diane M. Stahle of Davis, Hockenberg, Wine, Brown, Koehn & Shors, Des Moines, for defendants-appellees/cross-appellants.

Heard by Oxberger, C.J., and Schlegel and Sackett, JJ.

SCHLEGEL, J.

This appeal arises from a landlord tenant dispute. A jury rejected both the

tenants' claims and the owners' counter-claim. The tenants have appealed and the owners have cross-appealed.

The appellants challenge several instructions and evidentiary rulings, as well as the denial of a judgment n.o.v. on one of their claims. The appellees contend there was no evidence to support that part of the verdict rejecting their counterclaim for unpaid rent.

The plaintiffs, Joseph and Clair Galloway, leased office space in a commercial office building in Des Moines. In 1984 the office building was purchased by the defendants, Alan and Janice Zuckert. Various disputes soon arose between the Galloways and Alan Zuckert concerning terms of the lease, renewal of the lease, and conditions of the building. The Galloways also alleged that Alan Zuckert interfered with their business relationship with a fellow

tenant, a professional secretary service which the Galloways employed.

While the parties were in contention, Alan Zuckert sent a letter to Joseph Galloway and also sent copies of the letter to two other persons, one of whom did business with the Galloways. Joseph Galloway contends this letter falsely accused him of breaking his word.

The Galloways later filed the present suit, alleging breach of lease, interference with a contractual relationship, and libel. The Zuckerts counter-claimed for unpaid rent.

Our scope of review in this matter is for the correction of errors at law.
Iowa R. App. P. 4.

I. The Galloways claim that the district court erred by not instructing the jury that the statements in the letter written by Alan Zuckert constituted libel per se. In Vojak v.

Jensen, 161 N.W.2d 100, 104 (Iowa 1968), the supreme court defined libel and libel per se.

Libel is defined as a malicious publication, expressed either in printing or writing, or by signs and pictures, tending to injure the reputation of another or to expose him to public hatred, contempt, or ridicule or to injure him in the maintenance of his business.

Among statements which are libelous per se are those which charge business incompetence or lack of skill in the trade, occupation, profession or office by which one earns his living.

Id.

These two definitions show that the statements in the letter fall within the definition of libel and not libel per se. The statements in question, such as Zuckert was unable to do business with Galloway "on a handshake," may tend to injure the plaintiff in the maintenance of his business, but they do not specifically charge him with incompetence or

lack of skill. However, the court explained the Vojak holding in Kelly v. Iowa State Education Association, 372 N.W.2d 288, 295 (Iowa 1985). The court held that, "libel per se is not limited to certain charges. The passage in Vojak . . . clearly states that the charges listed are 'among' statements that are libelous per se." "Statements of any nature can be libelous per se. All that must be determined is that the court can presume as a matter of law that publication will have a libelous effect." Id.

The statements in question still cannot be said to be libelous as a matter of law. In addition to the definition set out in Vojak, the court in Kelly would also include statements that impute dishonesty as being libel per se. The statements by Zuckert, that he was not able to do business with Galloway "on a handshake" or that he did "an about-

face," are not synonymous with calling the appellant a liar nor do they impute dishonesty to any great degree. The court in Kelly recognized that when a publication is ambiguous, it is for the jury to decide whether a defamatory meaning was conveyed. Kelly, 372 N.W.2d at 296. The statements in question were sufficiently ambiguous to allow their submission to the jury, and it was not error to instruct the jury that the statements in the letter constituted mere libel.

The Galloways next contend it was error to include actual malice as an element of proof in the jury instructions. The term actual malice, as opposed to legal malice, merely means a plaintiff must prove the existence of malice while under legal malice the law presumes that it exists. The court in Vojak set out the elements of libel and

libel per se. "Certain statements are held to be libel per se, which means that they are actionable in and of themselves without proof of malice, falsity or damage. In actions based on language not libelous per se, all of these elements must be proved by plaintiff before recovery can be had, but when a statement is libelous per se they are presumed from the nature of the language used." Vojak, 161 N.W.2d at 104. The court includes malice as an element in both libel and libel per se. Appellant argues that including the element of actual malice in a claim for mere libel is illogical because it negates the "benefit" of possessing a qualified privilege. In order to overcome a claim of qualified privilege actual malice must be proven. Id at 105. The appellants suggest that if actual malice must be shown in an ordinary libel action the "benefit" of possessing a

qualified privilege is a false one. This is not entirely true. The "benefit" exists because actual malice must always be proven to negate a qualified privilege, even when statements would ordinarily constitute libel per se. Id. The district court did not err in including actual malice as an element of ordinary libel.

The appellants next challenge the definition of malice given to the jury. The district court defined actual malice as a statement made concerning another because of ill-will or hatred, or made recklessly with an intent to injure. In Kelly, the court followed the rule set out in McCarney v. Des Moines Register and Tribune Co., 239 N.W.2d 152 (Iowa 1976), regarding what must be shown in order to prove the element of actual malice. "Actual antagonism or contempt has been held insufficient to show

malice. So has intent to inflict harm. There must be an intent to inflict harm through falsehood." Kelly, 372 N.W.2d at 296. The McCarney case involved a public figure, but the definition of malice as an element of libel does not change depending on who is claiming it. The only thing that changes is whether it must be proven or whether the law will presume its existence.

The Galloways next challenge the testimony given by the defendant telling why the construction was being done on the leased property, and the testimony by defense witnesses as to the reputation of Alan Zuckert as a landlord.

The standard for the review of evidence matters is "clearly unreasonable." "We will not find an abuse of discretion in the trial court's admission or exclusion of evidence unless its action is clearly unreasonable." Blakely

v. Bates, 394 N.W.2d 320, 322 (Iowa 1986).

Iowa Rule of Evidence 701 allows a lay witness to testify in the form of an opinion if such testimony is helpful to a clear understanding of his testimony or the determination of a fact in issue. The question as to whether the construction was legitimate or not was in issue and allowing testimony by Zuckert as to why the construction was going on was certainly helpful and within the discretion of the trial judge.

The admission of the reputation testimony was not prejudicial to the plaintiff. It was the plaintiff who brought Zuckert's reputation as landlord into contention. It was not clearly unreasonable for the trial judge to view the defendant's character as being in issue and not error to allow the testimony.

Finally, appellant contends that the

district court should have granted Clair Galloway's motion for a judgment n.o.v.. Assuming that a proper motion for a directed verdict was made at the close of all the evidence, of which there is serious doubt and which is required by Iowa Rule of Civil Procedure 243(b), appellant was not entitled to a judgment n.o.v.. In reviewing a motion for a directed verdict, the appellate court must consider the evidence in a light most favorable to the non-moving party. Iowa R. App. P. 14(f)(2). Examining the evidence in that light shows the evidence was sufficient to support the jury's verdict.

II. Defendant's Counterclaim. The jury's findings of fact, that no rent was owed, are supported by substantial evidence. Appellee's request for attorney fees on this issue is denied.

AFFIRMED.

APPENDIX B
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IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

No. 9-59 / 88-267

Polk County Law No. 66-39057

ORDER

[Filed September 6, 1989]

JOSEPH M. GALLOWAY, et. al.,

Appellants,

vs.

ALAN ZUCKERT, et. al.,

Appellees.

Appellants' Petition for Rehearing
is hereby denied.

Done this 6th day of September, 1989.

/s/ Leo Oxberger
Chief Judge

APPENDIX C
- 13a -

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF IOWA

No. 88-267

[Filed November 3, 1989]

JOSEPH M. GALLOWAY,
JOSEPH M. GALLOWAY, P.C., and
CLAIR J. GALLOWAY,
Plaintiffs-Appellants/
Cross-Appellees,

vs.

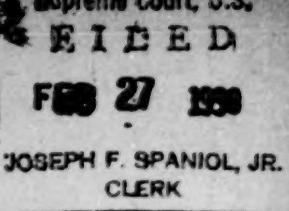
ALAN ZUCKERT and
JANICE H. ZUCKERT,
Defendants-Appellees/
Cross-Appellants.

After consideration by this court en banc, further review of the above-captioned case is hereby denied.

Dated this 3rd day of November, 1989.

THE SUPREME COURT OF IOWA

/s/ Arthur A. McGiverin,
Chief Justice



No. 89-1243 (3)

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BRIEF IN OPPOSITION TO A PETITION
FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI

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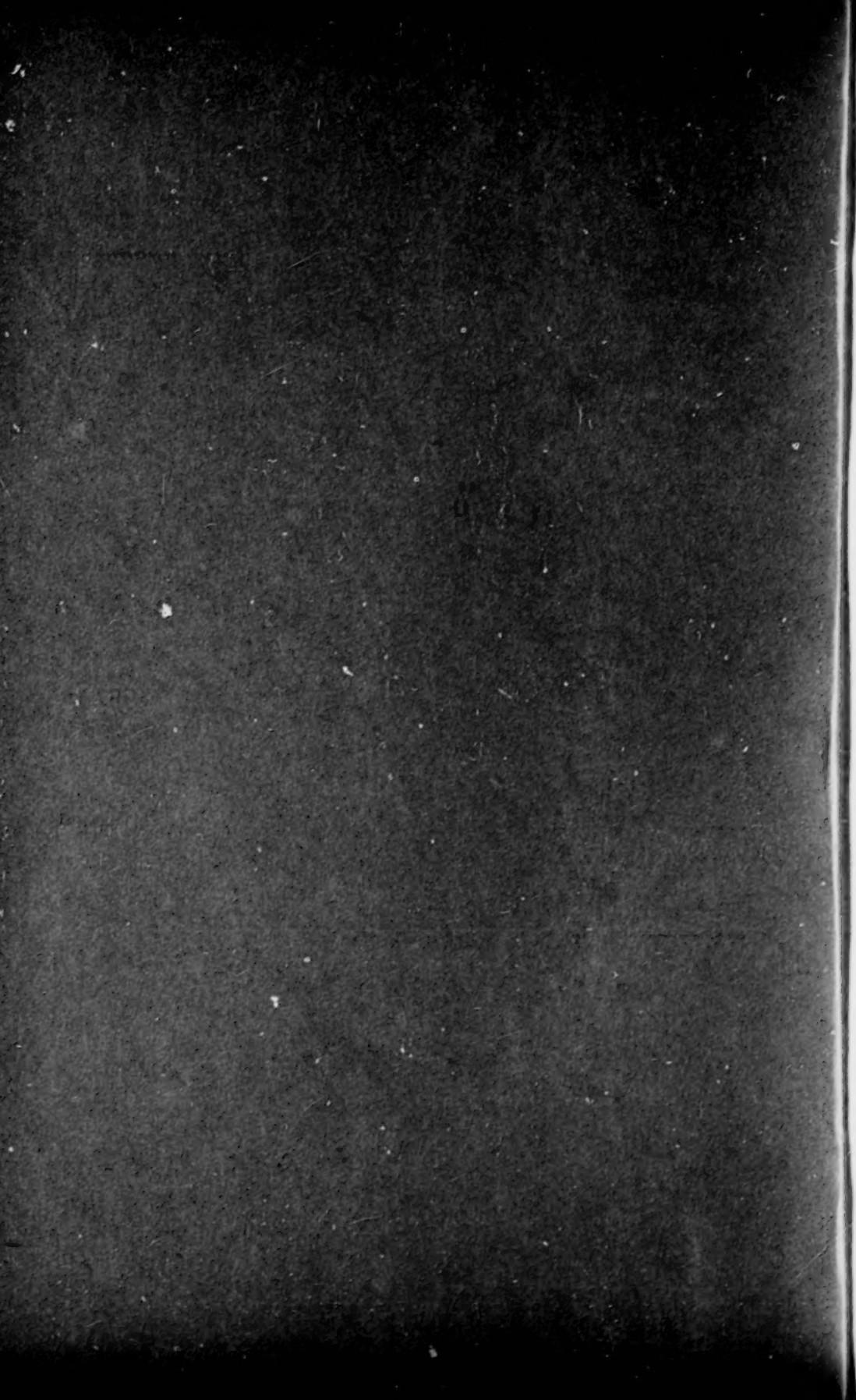


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No. 89-1243

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BRIEF IN OPPOSITION TO A PETITION
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CITATION TO OPINION BELOW

Galloway v. Zuckert, 447 N.W.2d 553 (Iowa Ct. App. 1989)

STATEMENT OF JURISDICTION

Petitioners state as the basis of this Court's jurisdiction 28 U.S.C. § 1257(3). It is assumed Petitioners are relying on 28 U.S.C. § 1257 as there is no longer a 28 U.S.C. § 1257(3).

This Court does not have jurisdiction as the Petitioners freely admit that they failed to raise any constitutional issues at any stage of the proceedings below. Furthermore, this case does not involve an important question of federal law but rather involves state libel law.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

This case arose out of a landlord/tenant dispute between Joe and Clair Galloway (Petitioners herein) and Alan Zuckert (Respondent herein), their landlord. Eight causes of action were presented to the jury by the Petitioners, including a claim of libel which is the only issue involved in the Petition for Writ of Certiorari.

The claim of libel arose out of a May 21, 1986 letter written by Alan Zuckert to Joe Galloway. This letter was in response to a demand for damages made by Joe Galloway over one year after he and his father, Clair Galloway, had left the offices they had rented from Mr. Zuckert. A copy of the letter written by Mr. Zuckert was sent to Mr. Zuckert's

attorney, Bud Hockenberg, (who only coincidentally was serving as Chairperson of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce) and to an individual named Elaine Amber who operated a business called Secretarial Services of Iowa. Ms. Amber had requested a copy of Mr. Zuckert's letter since her business had been mentioned in Joe Galloway's earlier demand letter. Ms. Amber testified at trial that Mr. Zuckert's letter did not cause her to think any less of Joe Galloway, did not cause her not to like him and did not cause her to feel that she would not want to do business with him. (Tr. p. 720).

On January 19, 1988, the jury unanimously decided that Joe Galloway had failed to prove libel. The Iowa Court of

Appeals affirmed the jury's verdict by decision dated August 23, 1989. The Petitioners requested that the Iowa Court of Appeals rehear the case, which was denied. The Petitioners also asked that the Iowa Supreme Court grant further review of the Court of Appeals decision, which request was denied by the Iowa Supreme Court on November 3, 1989.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The Supreme Court should not grant certiorari in this case as it does not involve an important question of federal law. Rather, this case arises out of a decision of the Iowa Court of Appeals concerning Iowa libel law as it pertains to private plaintiffs suing private defendants.

The Petitioners did not raise any constitutional challenges at any stage of the proceedings below, and the Iowa Court of Appeals did not, in any way, base its decision on constitutional principles. Since no federal rights were adjudged by the Iowa Court of Appeals, this Court should decline to review the state court decision.

REASONS FOR DENYING WRIT

- I. **THIS COURT DOES NOT HAVE JURISDICTION AS PETITIONERS ADMIT THEY FAILED TO RAISE THEIR EQUAL PROTECTION ARGUMENT AT ANY STAGE OF THE PROCEEDINGS BELOW.**

The Supreme Court is prohibited both by statute and rule from deciding issues that have not been presented first to state courts. 28 U.S.C. § 1257; SUP. CT. R. 21.1(h). The Petitioners admit that

they have not raised constitutional issues at any stage of the proceedings below. It has been stated frequently by this Court that the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to reexamine the final judgment of a state court can arise only if the record as a whole shows either expressly or by clear implication that the federal claim was adequately presented in the state system. Webb v. Webb, 451 U.S. 493, 496-97 (1981). The primary reason behind this requirement is that comity requires that state courts be afforded the opportunity to perform their separate functions. From a practical standpoint, the requirement affords the litigants an opportunity to fully develop the record necessary for adjudicating the issue and it permits state courts to

exercise their authority first, which may obviate any need for the Supreme Court to become involved. Id. at 499-501.

The Petitioners attempt to avoid the requirement of first raising constitutional issues below by claiming that their failure to do so was the result of an "extraordinary circumstance" and is thus exempt under Sure-Tan, Inc. v. NLRB, 467 U.S. 883, 896 n. 7 (1984). The Petitioners' reliance on Sure-Tan is misplaced, however. In that case, the statute under which suit had been brought (the National Labor Relations Act), specifically allowed arguments to be raised for the first time in the appeal from a decision of the NLRB upon a showing of "extraordinary circumstances." 29 U.S.C. § 160(e).

In the present case, however, the exact opposite is true as Iowa law requires that constitutional issues be first raised at the trial court level. The Iowa Supreme Court has made clear that it will not review issues raised for the first time on appeal, even if of constitutional magnitude. Estabrook v. Iowa Civil Rights Comm'n., 283 N.W.2d 306, 311 (Iowa 1979); Shill v. Careage Co., 353 N.W.2d 416, 420-421 (Iowa 1984).

It should also be noted that Petitioners' claim that they could not have raised their constitutional issues at an earlier time is factually without merit. Petitioners claim that until the Iowa Supreme Court decided Jones v. Palmer Communications, Inc., 440 N.W.2d 884 (Iowa 1989), they could not have

known that a negligence standard would be applied in libel cases involving private plaintiffs and media defendants. Thus, Petitioners argue that they had no opportunity to raise an equal protection argument with respect to the fact that different standards apply to private plaintiffs suing media defendants than apply to private plaintiffs suing private defendants.

In fact, however, the Iowa Supreme Court had specifically addressed this issue years earlier in Vinson v. Linn-Mar Community School Dist., 360 N.W.2d 108 (Iowa 1984). In Vinson, the Iowa Court considered whether the existing standard of proof for private libels should be modified to adopt the negligence standard set forth in Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.,

418 U.S. 323 (1974) for actions by private individuals against media defendants. The Iowa Supreme Court held:

In contrast to Gertz, the present case involves a non-media defendant. Thus no constitutional basis for applying the Gertz constraints appears. Because the plaintiff is not a public official or public figure, our holding in Anderson v. Low Rent Housing Commission, 304 N.W.2d 239 (Iowa 1981), is also distinguishable. In this situation where only a private plaintiff and non-media defendant are involved, the common law standard does not threaten the free and robust debate of public issues or a meaningful dialogue about self-government, or freedom of the press. We refuse to extend the Gertz holding to actions between a private individual and a non-media defendant. The same conclusion has been reached in the majority of jurisdictions in which the issue has arisen. (Citations omitted).

360 N.W.2d at 118. Thus, at the time this case was tried, the Iowa Supreme Court had already decided the issue. Petitioners now seek to raise for the first time in their Petition for Writ of Certiorari. The Petitioners failed to raise any constitutional issues before either the trial court or the Iowa Court of Appeals and cannot now raise them for the first time.

**II. EVEN ASSUMING, ARGUENDO,
PETITIONERS HAD RAISED AN
EQUAL PROTECTION ARGUMENT
BELOW, THE ARGUMENT HAS NO
MERIT.**

It is the Petitioners' position that the equal protection clause of the United States Constitution is violated because media defendants being sued for libel in Iowa are held to a different standard than are private individuals who are sued

for libel. Of course, because this issue was not raised below, there has been no record developed by the parties on this issue and no decision by the Iowa Court of Appeals on the merits of the Petitioners' argument.

The instant litigation involves an allegation of a purely private libel. The Petitioners argue for the first time that the burden of proof imposed in private libel cases is a denial of equal protection in light of the fact that private plaintiffs suing media defendants must prove negligence rather than malice as must be proved against private defendants. See, Jones v. Palmer Communications, Inc., 440 N.W.2d 884 (Iowa 1989) (negligence standard applied when a private plaintiff brings an action

for defamation against a media defendant); Vojak v. Jensen, 161 N.W.2d 100, 105 (Iowa 1968) (statements which are not libel per se require proof of malice, falsity and damage). As noted earlier, long before trial of this case the Iowa Supreme Court had expressly found there to be a rational basis to distinguish between the standards of proof applicable to media defendants and those applicable to non-media defendants.

Vinson v. Linn-Mar Community School District, 360 N.W.2d 108, 118 (Iowa 1984).

This Court has also recognized that there are substantially different interests involved in purely private libels than are involved in libels which involve public affairs and First

Amendment concerns. Garrison v.

Louisiana, 379 U.S. 64, 72 n. 8 (1964).

As noted by Justice Goldberg in New York

Times Co. v. Sullivan, 376 U.S. 254,

301-302 (1964):

Freedom of press and of speech insures that government will respond to the will of the people and that changes may be obtained by peaceful means.

Purely private defamation has little to do with the political ends of a self-serving society. The imposition of liability for private defamation does not abridge the freedom of public speech or any other freedom protected by the First Amendment.

Indeed, even when media defendants alone are involved, the standards of libel are different depending upon who is libeled. Public officials or figures must prove "actual malice" on the part of the media as that term is defined in New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, supra at

279-280. The standard of liability as to private individuals, however, is left up to the states to define and, so long as the media is not subject to liability without fault, a standard less rigorous than New York Times may be imposed.

Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc., 418 U.S. 323, 345-348 (1974).

A rational basis exists to establish a different burden of proof in cases of individuals defamed by media defendants, as opposed to private defendants, as the potential damage of a false statement by the media is much greater than a false publication which finds its way to a very small number of persons. The Iowa Supreme Court has already decided this issue and the Petitioners' argument is

without merit, even if it had been
properly raised by the Petitioners.

**III. THE DEFINITION OF MALICE
IN A LIBEL ACTION IS A
MATTER OF STATE LAW AND
THIS COURT DOES NOT
INVOLVE ITSELF WITH
NON-FEDERAL ISSUES.**

The Petitioners raise as one of their "constitutional" issues that the Iowa Court of Appeals erred in upholding a jury instruction which defined actual malice as "a statement made concerning another because of ill-will or hatred, or made recklessly with an intent to injure." (Appendix A). Petitioners fail to identify, however, how the definition of malice in any way involves a constitutional issue. The only constitutional provision cited by the Petitioners in their Petition for Writ of

Certiorari is the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. (Petition, p. 2). In their argument, however, the Petitioners fail to address even remotely how they were denied equal protection as a result of the definition of actual malice presented to the jury. Arguments which fail to state with accuracy, brevity and clarity whatever is essential to a ready and adequate understanding of the points requiring consideration will be a sufficient reason to deny a Petition for Writ of Certiorari. SUP. CT. R.

21.5.

At no time in the proceedings below did the Petitioners assert a constitutional challenge to the trial court's definition of actual malice. (Appendix B and C). The Iowa Court of

Appeals properly decided this issue as a matter of state law.

The law of libel is not a question of federal law, but is rather a state common law cause of action. This Court has expressed the clear position that it will not review state court judgments decided only on non-federal grounds.

Herb v. Pitcairn, 324 U.S. 117, 125-126 (1945).

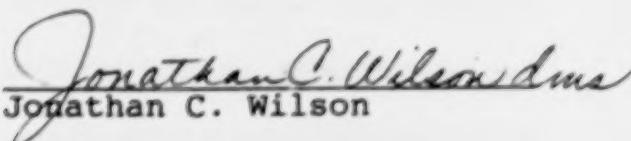
The issue of whether the trial court properly instructed the jury on the definition of actual malice is not an issue of federal law. Furthermore, the Petitioners have at no time previous hereto raised a constitutional challenge to the jury instruction.

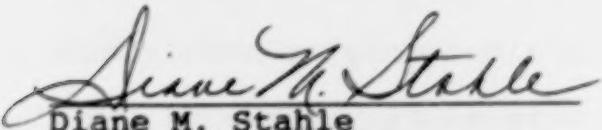
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CONCLUSION

The Petition for Writ of Certiorari
should be denied.

Respectfully submitted,

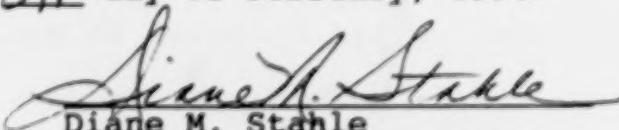

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Diane M. Stahle, a member of the Bar of this Court, hereby certify that three copies of this Brief in Opposition to Petition for Writ of Certiorari were served on Joseph M. Galloway, 550 39th Street, Suite 304, Des Moines, Iowa 50312 and Clair J. Galloway, 550 39th Street, Suite 304, Des Moines, Iowa 50312, by enclosing the same in an envelope bearing the appropriate addresses, with prepaid postage affixed thereto, and by depositing the same in a United States Post Office depository in Des Moines, Iowa on the 21st day of February, 1990.



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APPENDIX A

**JURY INSTRUCTION NO. 26 ON
DEFINITION OF LIBEL AND ACTUAL MALICE**

INSTRUCTION NO. 26

For the purposes of this claim of libel, the following definitions are applicable:

1. "Libel" is a malicious defamation of a person published in writing which tends to injure the reputation of another or expose him to public hatred, contempt or ridicule.
2. "Actual malice" refers to a condition of the mind which exists if a person makes statements concerning another because of personal spite, hatred or ill will against said person to, or against whom said action is directed. It may also result from a reckless or wanton disregard of the rights of others.

"Actual malice" exists only where there
is evidence tending to show that the act
was done willfully, wantonly or
recklessly with an intent to injure.

APPENDIX B

**GALLOWAYS' OBJECTION TO JURY
INSTRUCTION NO. 26 ENTERED
JANUARY 14, 1988**

And I would object to Instruction No. 26, which defines actual malice, and I am referring to the last five words of the instruction. I do not believe that actual malice requires an intent to injure but can also be satisfied by reckless conduct. So my suggestion would be to simply put a period after recklessly and omit the last five words.

THE COURT: Any other comments?

MR. JOSEPH GALLOWAY: No other comments, Your Honor.

(Trial Transcript p. 776).



APPENDIX C

**EXCERPT FROM GALLOWAYS' APPEAL
BRIEF RE DEFINITION OF ACTUAL MALICE
FILED AUGUST 2, 1988.**

**III. THE DEFINITION OF ACTUAL
MALICE GIVEN TO THE JURY
WAS INCORRECT.**

Although we contend that actual malice is not necessary to establish a claim for libel, in the absence of a qualified privilege, even if this Court decides that it is required, the definition of actual malice given to the jury was still incorrect.

Paragraph 2 of the Trial Court's Jury Instruction No. 26 stated that:

2. "Actual malice" refers to a condition of the mind which exists if a person makes statements concerning another because of personal spite, hatred or ill will against said person to, or against whom said action is directed. It may also result from a reckless or

wanton disregard of the rights of others. "Actual malice" exists only where there is evidence tending to show that the act was done willfully, wantonly or recklessly with an intent to injure (App. p.).

Plaintiff objected to this Instruction because of the last five words "with an intent to injure", and asked that these five words be deleted from the Instruction (Tr. p. 776).

By adding the requirement that there be an intent to injure, the Instruction seems to cancel out its previous references to recklessness.

"Recklessness" and "intent to injure" seem to be inconsistent concepts.

Recklessness implies a total lack of care about the consequences. See Clark v. Marietta, 138 N.W.2d 107, 111 (Iowa

1965), where this court stated regarding reckless driving, "It means, proceeding with no care coupled with disregard for consequences..."

If one has an intent to injure, on the other hand, obviously one does care about the consequences -- those consequences are desired to be harmful to someone.

At the very least, the jury would be confused by adding "intent to injure" on top of "recklessly."

a. Common law definition of actual malice.

The first two sentences of the Instruction seems to be correctly derived from Vojak v. Jensen, 161 N.W.2d 100, 107 (Iowa 1968). The Vojak decision states that actual malice can result from "a

reckless or wanton disregard of the rights of others." Id. There is no reference therein to an "intent to injure" being required, as contained in the third sentence of the Instruction. See also Cherry v. Des Moines Leader, 86 N.W. 323 (Iowa 1901), where actual malice in a libel case is defined as "personal spite or ill will, or culpable recklessness or negligence." Again, there is no requirement of an "intent of injure." Thus, the Instruction appears to be erroneous under the common law definition of actual malice.

b. "New York Times" definition of actual malice.

In New York Times v. Sullivan, 376 U.S. 254, 279-80 (1964), "actual malice" is defined as making a statement "with

knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not." Again, no requirement of an intent to injure is indicated.

It is true that later cases mention an "intent to inflict harm through falsehood," quoted in McCarney v. Des Moines Register & Tribune Co., 239 N.W.2d 152, 156 (Iowa 1976). However, this must be taken in the context of the discussion of whether a mere intent to injure is sufficient. Under the New York Times standard, the focus is on the defendant's attitude toward investigating the accuracy of the statement rather than on defendant's personal feelings toward the plaintiff. Thus, the cases hold that a mere intent to injure plaintiff is not sufficient to generate liability unless

the statement itself is either made with sufficient knowledge of falsehood or recklessness in determining whether it is accurate. Thus, the statement is made in cases that an "intent to injure" is not enough, but rather there must be an "intent to injure through falsehood." This does not mean that the alternative standard of recklessness in checking accuracy has been abandoned. See Curtis Publishing Co. v. Butts, 388 U.S. 130, 156-57 (1967), especially n. 20, where the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a media libel award based on recklessness in investigating accuracy rather than on any serious contention that defendant had animosity toward plaintiff.

Thus, the Trial Court in our case erred by making an "intent to injure" a

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necessary element of actual malice, which
prejudiced Plaintiff since recklessness
without an intent to injure is
sufficient.